

# Heidelberg Catechism –103 – Proper Worship – The Right Day.

TSK, GreekLexicon, Ryle, Poole, Gill, Henry, TSK, Family, Hodge, Calvin, Robertson, Geneva, Trapp, PNT, Expositor, Hanson,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Not all commands are explicit清晰的, 明确的...like there is no explicit command to baptize infants, but it does not make infant baptism婴儿洗礼 any less true. We know that the whole family must have the sign of the covenant圣约. There are many other examples of things that are not explicitly commanded or forbidden but they are.

And so it is with the day the Sabbath安息日 is observed. The change is not explicitly commanded but is clearly implicitly commanded. You will see that from God's Word today.

Our headings are:

Creation Law

Re-Creation Law

Re-Creation Law Confirmed

Our goals are: That you properly understand that you are to keep the Sabbath Day, though the day that it is observed has changed, and as a covenant child, you will endeavor (努力) to obey the 4<sup>th</sup> command for Christ's glory and your good.

## Creation Law

### 1. The Sabbath is a creation ordinance.

A creation ordinance (法令) is a law that was given from the beginning of the world. Other creation ordinances were marriage and procreation (having children). These cannot change.

Genesis 2: 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. **3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified (使成圣, 圣华) it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.**

### 2. You will notice the 4<sup>th</sup> command starts with “remember.”

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This means the Sabbath was there even before the 10 commands were given at Sinai.

Exodus 16:22 And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said:

**'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'**

God gave manna 吗哪 each day for that day so the Israelites would have food as they traveled through the desert from Egypt to Canaan. If they picked up too much manna for one day so that it was left over for the next day, it bred worms. But on the 6<sup>th</sup> day they were required to gather two times the manna for the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Sabbath. The Sabbath manna did not breed worms. This confirmed the existence and the honoring of the Sabbath.

### 3. “Sabbath” does not only mean 7<sup>th</sup>; Sabbath means “rest” also, the rest day simply was put on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

Emphasis was not put on the uniqueness of the 7<sup>th</sup> day but on the rest. For example: A certificate of divorce does not make the divorce proper. (7<sup>th</sup> day) It is the reason for the divorce that determines whether it were proper or not. (Rest)

## Re-Creation Law

### 1. Not all commands in the Scriptures are explicitly stated; some commands are given by

#### Apostolic(使徒的) or Christ's example.

Let us begin to examine the evidences.

### 2. Jesus was raised from the dead on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.

When we keep the Sabbath on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week we celebrate Christ's resurrection (复活) –the completion of your re-creation.

John 20:1 Now on the **first day of the week** Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

While Saturday Sabbath celebrated your creation, the Sunday Sabbath pictured your re-creation in Jesus Christ. With Christ's work of redemption done, he stopped on Sunday – the new Sabbath, just as he stopped after his initial creation.

### 3. After his resurrection dead, Jesus customarily met with his disciples on Sunday as they gathered together.

John 20:19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Yes, this was a closed-door meeting, but this was only because of fear. Their doors would have been opened if they did not fear.

John 20:26 And **after eight days** His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

In this 2<sup>nd</sup> case, this seemed less of a secret meeting, but the mentioning of the day is remarkable. This was **the first day of the week**. How do we know that? We know this according to Jewish counting! Josephus, confirmed this. Any part of a day was considered a day **and written as a "day and night."** Many cultures, even today, count time the same way - like the Koreans when they count age. Remember how the Bible says that Jesus was buried for 3 days and 3 nights? It didn't mean 3X24 hour days, but parts of 3 days. **What we can conclude is that Christ himself is stipulating the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday by meetings with his disciples on Sunday.**

### 4. After Jesus returned to heaven, the churches that were formed met regularly for worship on Sundays.

Acts 20:7 Now on **the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

Luke literally said: On the first... **the Sabbath- "sabbaton."** Our translation ignores "sabbaton" choosing to translate the intention rather than the word. **When the disciples came together to break bread, it did not mean that they came to have lamb chops together.** It meant that they came together for worship – part of which was for the Lord's Supper (圣餐). The reason worship was called the Breaking of Bread was because it was celebrated each time people came together for worship. (During the time of the Reformation, worship was called Word and Sacrament(圣礼), because there was always the preaching of the Word and the sacrament.) In Acts 20:7, Paul preached to the brothers on Sunday. And the apostles continued the principle of remembering and honoring the resurrection of Jesus (re-creation) by meeting on Sunday instead of Saturday.

**But there is another theological conclusion as well.** If Saturday Sabbath were not abrogated (被废除的), then God's people would be sinning by not working on 2 days as a regular course of

life – the old Sabbath Day and Sunday. But God wants man to work for 6 days and rest and worship for 1.

**5. The Bible teaches that the Sabbath was the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.**

1Corinthians 16: 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the **first day of the week** let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Paul literally said: On the **1<sup>st</sup> – the Sabbath.** Our translation ignores “sabbaton.” The Corinthians were called to collect offerings for poor Christians in Jerusalem when they gathered on Sunday. So Christians continued the actions of the Sabbath of helping the poor, except that it was the **Sunday Sabbath, not the Saturday Sabbath.**

**6. The Apostle John, as he worshipped on Sunday, was given the Revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit **on the Lord’s Day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

History confirms, by those who lived at the same time as John, that the “**Lord’s Day**” was **Sunday**. Many early versions of the Bible simply included that it was the first day of the week. The term Lord’s Day came about because people gathered to eat the Lord’s Supper. This kind of term was in use in Rome, where the Caesar’s (Emperor) Day was the day he paid his employees.

**7. Now here is that remarkable piece of evidence in support of the change of Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.**

**God planned for the new Sabbath to be on Sunday in the 3 major Old Testament feasts—feasts which prefigured the work of Jesus.** All 3 of those feasts were on Sundays...not Saturdays, the usual Sabbath day.

**a. The Feast of the Unleavened bread除酵节 (Passover逾越节) pictured Christ’s sacrifice for sinners. Sunday!**

Leviticus 23:6 ‘And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

Day 1 of the 1<sup>st</sup> month was a Sabbath...Day 15<sup>th</sup> would be the day after the Sabbath.

**b. The Feast of Pentecost五旬节 (Weeks or Harvest) pictured the giving of new life to the church...as when the Holy Spirit came. Pentecost, in the New Testament, took place on Sunday.**

Leviticus 23:10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf ( 捆 ) of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

11 ‘He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

**15** ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. **16** ‘Count fifty days

to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.

Fifty days after the Sabbath is Sunday – 7 weeks +1.

**c. The Feast of the Ingathering 住棚节，也称收割节 (Tabernacles会幕) pictured the gathering of all the elect of God into Christ's kingdom.**

Leviticus 23:34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. 36 `For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation (集会), and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

With 28 day months, you can see that each of these feasts was on the first day of the week. So Christ's work of re-creation was celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.

**Re-Creation Law Confirmed**

**1. Ignatius – the most ancient church father, probably contemporary of John said:**

**Let every one that loves Christ keep holy the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, the Lord's Day.**

While we must obey God every day of the week, we are especially called to keep the Sabbath holy.

**Justin Martyr, in his Apologetics 2 (护教学2)**, explained that the Lord's Day was Sunday, and that it was called the Christian Sabbath. Another time he explained "Christians met together in one place, and read the Scriptures, and prayed together, and administered the ordinance of the supper; and this, he adds, was the first day in which God created the World, and our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead."

**Tertullian (The Chaplet, p3) – "On the Lord's Day we deem it wrong to fast."** He was referring to Sunday. **Irenaeus, Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen** also stated that Sunday was the Christian Sabbath.

**2. Those who hold to Saturday are legalists (律法主义者) .**

They hold on to the letter and ignore the spirit (精意) of the law. They are also denying the indirect command and examples of Christ and his Apostles.

**Conclusion:**

The Sabbath was commanded for all people of all ages. While it started on the Saturday, in preparation for a change of the Sabbath to Sunday, the 3 annual feasts which pictured the work of Jesus and the results of the works of Jesus were all celebrated on Sundays: The Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of the Ingathering. The

Lord was raised from the dead on Sunday, met with his disciples on Sundays after his resurrection, and the Apostles and early church met each Sunday for worship. The Bible and history confirm this. (And in a way, it is a return to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week – man's first day of the week – which was the first Sabbath!)

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. We do have the right day.** The Sabbath is not Saturday but Sunday. **But having the right day for the Sabbath is not enough.**

**2. Love the Sabbath and reflect on Christ's work in saving you on the cross and giving you new life.** Reflect on the time **when your salvation will be completed** and you will rest forever in the presence of the Lord. Don't see it as a restriction from getting things done. Learn God's Word. **Learn of your salvation and sanctification.**

**3. Love the Sabbath and make it the most productive day of the week.** Work for God. Do good for your neighbor. Worship him. Bring others to worship him.

Finally, God demands your worship and on the right day, but you have no ability to worship him unless your heart has been changed and Christ's judgment is counted as yours. Why not ask God to count Christ's suffering on the cross as yours? If you do, you will become God's child forever and be able to enter his presence and worship him.